

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 1 through 14, 17 through 25, and 27 through 52 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Please amend Claims 15 and 26 and add Claims 53 through 83 as follows:

1-14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) A method ~~as claimed in Claim 2~~ of distributing a plurality of products from a cabinet having a door, the method comprising:
fitting each product with a radio frequency identification tag;
positioning the plurality of products in the cabinet;
sensing opening and closing of the cabinet door;
scanning the plurality of products in the cabinet upon sensing closing of the cabinet door to determine the number and type of products in the cabinet;
generating a message based on the number and type of products in the cabinet;
transmitting the message to a server;
maintaining an inventory in the server based on the message;
reading a code on a user badge;
acknowledging having read the user badge;
determining the authenticity of the code read from the user badge; and
opening the cabinet if the code read from the user badge is authentic,
wherein the server uses a self-updating boot up procedure, the procedure comprising:

- (a) receiving a message containing a most recent software version number;
- (b) comparing a software version number currently used to the most recent software version number;
- (c) downloading the most recent software version if versions differ when compared;
- (d) writing the downloaded software to memory; and
- (e) booting the downloaded software.

16. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 15, further comprising:
requesting an updated user list; and
receiving the updated user list.

17-25. (Cancelled)

26. (Currently Amended) A system ~~as claimed in Claim 19~~ for distributing a plurality of products, each product having a radio frequency tag, the system comprising:
a radio frequency user badge having a code;
at least one micro-warehouse, the micro-warehouse having (a) an output device,
(b) a door with a proximity sensor, (c) an antenna mounted on the micro-warehouse, and (d) a
controller coupled to the proximity sensor and the antenna, the controller operable to receive the
code, to activate the output device after receiving the code on the user badge, to scan the plurality
of products and determine the identity of each of the products, and to create a message including
the identity of each of the products; and

a server coupled to the controller to receive the message,

wherein the controller uses a self-updating boot up procedure, the procedure comprising:

(a) receiving a message from the server containing a software version number;

(b) comparing the software version number currently used to the most recent software version number;

(c) downloading the most recent software version if the versions differ when compared;

(d) writing the downloaded software to memory; and

(e) booting the downloaded software.

27-52. (Cancelled)

53. (New) An apparatus comprising:

a detecting device that is configured to detect, using RFID, removal from storage of an object having a RFID tag;

a temperature detection unit that is configured to determine the temperature within the storage; and

a control unit that is configured to prevent a user from accessing the storage in accordance with the temperature determined by said temperature detection unit.

54. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 53, further comprising a charging unit that is configured to charge a user for the object in response to the detection by said detecting device of the removal from the area of the object.

55. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 53, wherein the storage is selected from the group consisting of a refrigerator, a freezer, a container, a room, a cabinet, and an apparatus, and

wherein said detecting device detects the removal in accordance with a comparison between two inventory records, each prepared in accordance with RFID detection.

56. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 53, wherein the object comprises a life science research product.

57. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 56, wherein the life science research product is selected from the group consisting of enzyme, assay, cloning vector, and competent cell.

58. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 53, further comprising an access control unit that is configured to control access to the storage.

59. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 58, wherein said access control unit comprises a detection unit selected from the group consisting of a card reader, a magnetic card swipe device, an antenna, a fingerprint reader, and an RFID device, and

wherein said access control unit controls access to the storage in accordance with a detection by said detection unit.

60. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 58, further comprising a commerce processing unit that is configured to store information providing a correspondence between (a) a user that has used said access control unit to access the storage and (b) the removed object.

61. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 60, wherein said commerce processing unit invoices the user for the removed object.

62. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 61, wherein the invoicing is electronic.

63. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 55, wherein the two inventory records are prepared in accordance with respective successive RFID scans of the storage.

64. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 53, wherein a determination as to whether to restock the object is automatically made by a restock determination unit in accordance with the detection by said detecting device.

65. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 64, wherein the restock determination unit is in another apparatus.

66. (New) A system comprising:

a detecting device that is configured to detect, using RFID, whether an object having a RFID tag is present in an area;

a determination unit that is configured to determine how much time the object has spent in the area in accordance with the detection by said detecting device; and

a comparing unit that is configured to compare the time determined by said determination unit to a predetermined amount of time.

67. (New) A system according to Claim 66, wherein said shelf life determination unit is further configured to determine a temperature history for the object.

68. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 66, wherein the area is selected from the group consisting of a refrigerator, a freezer, a container, a room, a cabinet, and an apparatus.

69. (New) A system comprising:

detecting means that is configured to detect, using RFID, whether an object having a RFID tag is present in an area;

means for determining how much time the object has spent in the area in accordance with the detection by said detecting means; and

means for comparing the time determined by said determining means with a predetermined amount of time.

70. (New) A system according to Claim 69, wherein the area is selected from the group consisting of a refrigerator, a freezer, a container, a room, a cabinet, and an apparatus.

71. (New) A method comprising:

detecting, using RFID, whether an object having a RFID tag is present in an area;

and

determining how much time the object has spent in the area in accordance with the detection by said RFID detecting step; and

comparing the time determined in said determining step with a predetermined amount of time.

72. (New) A method according to Claim 71, wherein the area is selected from the group consisting of a refrigerator, a freezer, a container, a room, a cabinet, and an apparatus.

73. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 53, wherein the object comprises biological material.

74. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 53, further comprising a user detecting unit that is configured to detect the identity of a user that has accessed the storage.

75. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 74, further comprising a commerce processing unit that is configured to store information providing a correspondence between (a) the identity of the user detected by said user detecting unit and (b) the removed object.

76. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 75, wherein said commerce processing unit charges the user for the removed object.

77. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 53, wherein said detecting device further detects, using RFID, addition to the storage of an object having a RFID tag.

78. (New) A system comprising:
detecting means for detecting, using RFID, a change in presence in storage of an object having an RFID tag; and
determining means for determining whether the object detected by said detecting means has been recalled.

79. (New) A system according to Claim 78, further comprising access prevention means for preventing a user from accessing the object in accordance with a determination by said determining means that the object has been recalled.

80. (New) A system according to Claim 79, wherein said access prevention means comprises a lock.

81. (New) An apparatus comprising:
a detecting device that is configured to detect, using RFID, removal from storage of a RFID tag;

a temperature detection unit that is configured to determine the temperature within the storage; and

a control unit that is configured to prevent a user from accessing the storage in accordance with the temperature determined by said temperature detection unit.

82. (New) A system comprising:

a detecting device that is configured to detect, using RFID, whether a RFID tag is present in an area;

a determination unit that is configured to determine how much time an object corresponding to the RFID tag has spent in an area in accordance with the detection by said detecting device; and

a comparing unit that is configured to compare the time determined by said determination unit to a predetermined amount of time.

83. (New) A system comprising:

detecting means for detecting, using RFID, a change in presence in storage of a RFID tag; and

determining means for determining whether an object corresponding to the RFID tag detected by said detecting means has been recalled.